

Two New Maples Resist Bugs, Cold

Breeders and nursery operators looking for a better maple tree may want to climb aboard the Red Rocket. Or, they can head for the New World. Red Rocket has fiery-red leaves and outstanding cold and disease resistance. New World is an orange-red maple tailor-made for city landscaping. Red Rocket thrives in USDA growing zone 3, where temperatures can go as low as -40°F. Columnar shape and cold resistance make Red Rocket an ideal line of defense against wind and weather around barns and livestock shelters. It would also work well as a shelter and screen around picnic areas and industrial sites. New World can thrive in zone 4, where temperatures can drop to -30°F. Unlike most maples—and somewhat like an American elm—New World sends its branches up, then out. This shady character, along with cold resistance, makes it ideal for city streets and residential neighborhoods in the Northeast and Midwest. Nurseries and breeders can request cuttings of the new cultivars from the U.S. National Plant Germplasm System. Some wholesale nurseries may offer the trees by 2000. *Alden M. Townsend, USDA-ARS U.S. National Arboretum, Glenn Dale, Maryland; phone (301) 344-4175, e-mail nadt@ars-grin.gov/*

Fungal Enzyme Could Help Livestock Retain Phosphate

More of the enzyme called phytase may be added to chicken and hog feeds if new research leads to a more economical approach. Without phytase, poultry and swine excrete lots of phosphate—a potential water pollutant—in their manure. But phytase is not a widely used feed additive in the United States. That's

mainly because the enzyme breaks down under high temperatures during the feed-production process. Recently, ARS scientists in New Orleans identified an isolate of *Aspergillus* fungi that makes phytase able to withstand 160°F for several minutes. The scientists are seeking a commercial collaborator to help produce a superior enzyme for use by the animal feed industry. *Edward Mulaney and Jaffor Ullah, USDA-ARS Commodity Utilization Research Unit, New Orleans, Louisiana; phone (504) 286-4364, e-mail emul@nola.srrc.usda.gov aullah@nola.srrc.usda.gov/*

New Kids' Diet Survey

Since December 1997, interviewers have been visiting households of about 5,000 infants and young children to gather voluntary data on the foods they eat. This survey is an extension of a larger 1994-96 survey, What We Eat in America, that covered all age groups. The new survey covers only children under 10 years old. Information about this age group from both surveys will help those who are planning programs dealing with children's needs, such as food assistance and nutrition education. But ARS is conducting the new survey primarily to supply the Environmental Protection Agency with enough data for adequately estimating children's exposure to pesticide residues in the diet. The estimates are required under the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act. Interviewers under contract by ARS will collect 2 days' worth of food intake data in more than 60 areas around the country. They will ask a parent or other adult caregiver to provide the information for children age 5 and under. Six-to-9-year-olds will be interviewed with their caregivers' help. *Sharon Mickle, USDA-ARS*

Food Surveys Research Group, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Riverdale, Maryland; phone (301) 734-5619, e-mail smickle@rbhnrc.usda.gov/

Navaho Blackberries May Firm Up Domestic Berry Market

Fresh blackberries sometimes appear only briefly in supermarket produce sections because they quickly turn soft and unsalable. Their typical shelf life is only 3 or 4 days. But one variety deserves to be better known. ARS scientists recently discovered that Navaho blackberries have a shelf life of 14 to 21 days. Navaho, the first thornless blackberry with erect rather than spreading canes, was bred and released by the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. But that was 10 years ago; Navaho's staying power only recently came to light. In a test, ARS scientists stored Navaho blackberries in coolers like those the industry uses before transporting the berries to stores. Then they sent a test shipment to The Netherlands. The test included a 4-hour refrigerated trip for berries from an Oklahoma farm to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and a 2-day air shipment with dry ice. The berries arrived in The Netherlands firm, exceptionally sweet, and consistently tasty—just as they were when picked. The discovery should give the fresh blackberry market a boost. Navaho is adapted in the Pacific Northwest, Southern Plains, and South Atlantic regions. *Penelope Perkins-Veazie, USDA-ARS South Central Agricultural Research Laboratory, Lane, Oklahoma; phone (405) 889-7395, e-mail pperkins@ag.gov/*